

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00

PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 SP-02 /039 W

-----101107Z 099979 /21

R 100400Z MAR 77

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7857

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMCONSUL UDORN

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENTIANE 0474

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EAID SREF SEDU LA FR AS

SUBJECT: GROUP OF LAO STUDENTS RETURNS FROM FRANCE

1. PARTY NEWSPAPER "VOICE OF THE PEOPLE" REPORTED MARCH 7 THAT SPECIAL AIR FRANCE FLIGHT BROUGHT OVER ONE HUNDRED LAO STUDENTS BACK TO VIENTIANE MARCH 5. VIENTIANE MAI NEWSPAPER SAID GROUP TOTALING 143 INCLUDED 108 STUDENTS, TWO MILITARY STUDENTS, SIXTEEN WORKERS, EIGHT REFUGEES AND NINE CHILDREN. VICE PRESIDENT OF LAO STUDENTS IN FRANCE, SAYASENG KHAMPHASITH, WHO LED THE GROUP, SAID THAT MOST OF THE STUDENTS WERE GRADUATES IN LAW, GEOLOGY AND OTHER SUBJECTS. A SIMILAR FLIGHT WILL REPORTEDLY BE ARRANGED IN NEAR FUTURE.

2. MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF PROTOCOL KHAMTAN RATANAVONG SAID TWO OF HIS SONS AND HIS DAUGHTER-IN-LAW RETURNED WITH GROUP. OTHER SOURCES SAID RETURNEES INCLUDED MANOLA KHAMPHASITH, WIFE OF SAYASENG AND A NIECE OF FORMER PRIME MINISTER  
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PHOU SANANIKONE WHO IS REFUGEE IN FRANCE, AS WELL AS A DAUGHTER OF FORMER INTERIOR MINISTER PHENG PHONG-SAVAN, NOW IN VIENGSAI REINDOCTRINATION CAMP.

3. GROUP REPORTEDLY RETURNED VOLUNTARILY, BUT AIR FRANCE CONTACT TOLD US ONLY 142 RETURNED, ONE HAVING DISAPPEARED AFTER HIS BAGGAGE WAS LOADED ON BOARD.

TAKEOFF DELAYED WHILE PILOT HAD ALL BAGGAGE OFFLOADED TO ELIMINATE UNACCOMPANIED BAGGAGE OF "NO-SHOW" FOR OBVIOUS SECURITY REASONS. THE PLANE WAS CHARTERED BY LPDR.

4. ALL RETURNING STUDNETS WILL REPORTEDLY VISIT WITH THEIR FAMILIEIS UNTIL MARCH 18, WHEN THEY WILL BE SENT TO FORMER LAW SCHOOL TO ATTEND A RE-EDUCATION SEMINAR. AFTER THE SEMINAR LPDR OFFICIALS HAVE REPORTEDLY PROMISED TO SEND SOME STUDENTS WHO HAVE NOT YET COMPLETED THEIR EDUCATION TO STUDY FURTHER IN COMMUNIST COUNTRIES. OTHERS WILL CONTINUE THEIR EDUCATION IN LPDR. STUDENTS WHO HAVE GRADUATED WILL REPORTEDLY BE ASSIGNED TO POSITIONS WITH THE GOVERNMENT.

5. WESTERN BUSINESSMAN SAID THAT LAO SOURCES HAD TALKED WITH SOVIET MILITARY ATTACHE AT AIRPORT WHO REMARKED THAT STUDENTS WERE FOOLS TO RETURN FROM FRANCE TO THE "CEMETERY".  
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## Message Attributes

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**Review Markings:**  
Margaret P. Grafeld  
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